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# THE CRAYON.

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## FEELING AND TALENT.

THAT portion of the pleasure which we receive from a work of Art, which is due to the artist himself, as distinguished from that which we find in Nature, or the material with which the artist has to deal, is referable to two sources—his feeling and his talent. In more strict metaphysical language, we should call the former *Love*, and the latter *Power*—the embodiment of the former being the motive, and the latter being the means, for which and by which he labors. On this relation turns the whole question of the perfection of this or that phase of Art. To the *feeling* of the artist is owing all that is original and of peculiar worth in his conceptions, while his *talent* is employed only in giving form to that which his feeling has already perfected. If this is admitted, we at once see that we must rank artists in worthiness according to the nobility of their feeling, rather than according to the amount of mere talent they possess—so that we must give precedence to the man who *conceives* nobly and purely, rather than the one who *executes* admirably.

It may then, we think, be set down as a rule of criticism that that which gives evidence of a genuine affection on the part of the artist ought to take a primary place in our esteem, while the tokens of power should be considered secondarily, and only with reference to their end. If that be good, the power is admirable in proportion to its greatness; but if, on the other hand, that be unworthy or vicious, we ought to regard the talent as only idly or basely bestowed, and worthy of no admiration. THERE IS NO SAFETY IN CRITICISM ON ANY OTHER GROUNDS THAN THESE. Individually, you may prefer what you please, but the preference of no person or number of persons forms a sound basis for Art criticism. One may love Teniers more than Raphael, and yet be compelled to admit that the latter is really the more worthy of the two—not because he had greater power, for there does not seem to be a great difference in this respect, but because his conceptions are, beyond all cavil, nobler and more elevated.

By this the classification of artists becomes comparatively easy. First would

come those who love most those higher technical qualities which refer to some great qualities of nature, light and shade, and color, as Rembrandt and Rubens; then those who love humanity for the dignity and nobility in it, as Gainsborough, Titian, and all great portrait painters, but higher still than these, those who love humanity for the Divinity in it, as the young Raphael and the religious painters of the Middle Ages, among whom it would seem angelic presences dwelt, stamping their creations with the supremest Beauty, and peace, and blessedness. Within these degrees are others marked by greater or less power, but the artist can never be removed from his place in this classification by any amount of power. It makes not the slightest difference whether you or we like this class of artists or that, most; we may not like Fra Angelico's men and women; but if so, it is because we should not like any men and women in the state of spiritual elevation to which he has carried his—they would probably be very dull to us, but they are none the less heavenly because we do not fancy their society. We may like Titian's people better than Raphael's, but our likings or dislikings do not change the positions of the two men, nor can it prevent Raphael's from being considered the higher attainment of the Art-spirit.

The tendency of modern criticism seems to be directly towards the reversal of this position, giving artists rank entirely according to their cleverness or technical ability. The consequence of this is, that truth and earnestness are sacrificed to force and facility, and artists become superficial instead of sincere. This is not perhaps to be wondered at when we see how much reverence is attached to Greatness, and how comparatively little to Goodness—when we see men continually sacrificing the purity of their hearts to the power of their intellects. We have been given by nature an instinctive reverence for Greatness, but we should let our reason so accept this instinct as to bend only before that greatness which has been consecrated to the service of the good and the true. This, which is a common-place truth in morals, is not so felt in Art, but the law and its operations are the same.

There are two maxims which we would

impress on the minds of all young artists, and which older ones, who have not already established them in their minds, would do well to consider: that Sincerity is nobler than Facility, and that the only Facility worth having is attained only through Sincerity. Bearing these always in mind, the artist will not waste his life in ineffectual graspings after that power which is never to be acquired, but is given by nature; while he neglects to cultivate that which will come to him—the power of Truth, of sincere, manly, invincible Purpose.

## RURAL OLD ENGLAND.

THERE is a charm in the scenery of England perfectly inexplicable by any known-to-me laws of external impression. It is not because it is picturesque, because I hate the picturesque—it is not beautiful, compared with the wide-sweeping Susquehanna, or Connecticut—not grand like the Hudson, and is particularly devoid of the wildness which is essential to the full expression of the sentiment of external nature. Somehow the sedgy banks of the Thames never acted on me like those of the Mohawk, to which they are very similar—the wide spread of the weald of Kent never impressed me so grandly as some of our own stretches of valley land; but in all there seemed an element of human emotion, of the interest which humanity mingles in with all that we see and hear. I cannot explain it. I am not an analyst sufficiently subtle to detect all the components of my own emotions. English landscape and English people are always united in my memory, but why, I leave to some one who can reason on metaphysics better than I.

It was my good fortune to spend a part of a summer in Surrey, just where it joins to Kent. My rambles radiated over the country with careless indifference to the direction, for I knew that I should never fail to find some by-path filled with charming nooks and pleasant surprises. There is a pleasant law in England, that paths that have been open for a year and a day continuously, can never be closed again; and so there are pathways over the country in every direction, through which you may traverse it much more pleasantly than by any other way. There was one which led from the hamlet where I stayed, to a village three miles away, which affords me most delightful recollections. It was June when I was there, and the summer flowers were coming forth in profusion; the trees, just leaved out, had the purity of green they lose so soon in England. This path entered and crossed a broad elevated meadow, from which could be seen a long